



Occupational interstitial lung diseases

Pneumoconiosis is a term for a group of lung diseases caused by breathing in specific dusts in your workplace. They get lodged inside your lungs and cause scarring.

The most common type is coal worker's pneumoconiosis, caused by breathing in coal dust. Other forms are silicosis, caused by exposure to silica dust and asbestosis, caused by breathing in asbestos.

There is often a long delay (20 years or more) between breathing in the dust and showing symptoms, so new cases usually reflect past working conditions. You'll often be retired before you're diagnosed.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include:

- shortness of breath
- persistent cough
- tiredness
- difficulty breathing
- chest pain
- coughing up black phlegm (coal worker's pneumoconiosis only)

Treatment

The main treatment is avoiding the dust or fumes causing the condition. There are no specific drug treatments. Oxygen therapy and pulmonary rehabilitation may help with your symptoms.

If you have been exposed to certain substances in the course of your work, you may be entitled to compensation or benefits. Call our helpline to find out more.

Further information

Pneumoconiosis is a type of pulmonary fibrosis. You can find more information about pulmonary fibrosis in the following downloads:

- *Pulmonary fibrosis – What it is and how it affects your breathing*
- *Pulmonary fibrosis – Diagnosis and tests*
- *Pulmonary fibrosis – Treatment and support*

Get in touch with us to find support near you.

Helpline: **03000 030 555**

Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Ringing our helpline never costs more than a local call and is usually free, even from a mobile.

helpline@blf.org.uk

blf.org.uk

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Registered charity in England and Wales (326730), Scotland (038415) and the Isle of Man (1177)



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We value feedback on our information. To let us know your views, and for the most up to date version of this information and references, call the helpline or visit **blf.org.uk**